

Double check your knots and harness buckle.
Inspect and replace your gear as necessary.
Fixed gear is unreliable - back it up.
Know your partners and their habits.
Check your belay - are you sure you're on?
Read all warnings - they can save your life.
Keep an eye on the weather.
Rock can break - check your holds.
Always double check your rappel system.
Wear a helmet - it can save your life.

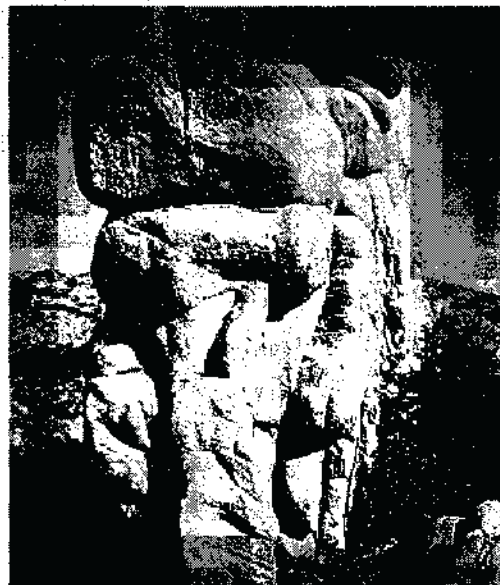
U.S. Department of Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge
Rt. 1, Box 448
Indiahoma, OK 73552 580/429-3222

Wichita Mountains Climbers Coalition
P.O. Box 721567
Norman, OK 73070-8207
405/364-9390
E-mail: WichitaMtn@aol.com

the ACCESS FUND
P.O. Box 17010
Boulder, CO 80308
303/545-6772

cover photo by Hal Cantwell

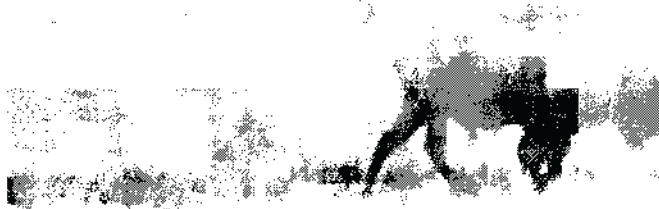
ROCK CLIMBING



WICHITA MOUNTAINS WILDLIFE REFUGE

THE REFUGE

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is the oldest of more than 500 federal wildlife refuges managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for the purpose of preserving native American wildlife. Located in southwest Oklahoma, this remarkable area is dominated by rugged granite mountains, oak forests, and mixed grass prairies. These unspoiled lands provide excellent habitat for herds of bison, elk, and other native and migratory wildlife. The preservation of this unique system of grasslands and prairie herds is the mission of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.



PUBLIC USE

The 22,400 acre public use portion of the Refuge offers visitors the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and appreciation of the natural environment through direct exposure to wildlife and wildlands. Permitted recreational uses such as wildlife observation, hiking, fishing and rock climbing provide the public an opportunity to gain a renewed commitment to the value of environmental stewardship. Within the public use area lies the 5,700 acre Charons Garden Wilderness Area which received special designation and protection under the Wilderness Act of 1964. This pristine environment offers Refuge visitors a chance to experience the solitude of wilderness lands. In order to maintain the wilderness character of this area, more stringent guidelines apply to regulating public uses in the Charons Garden Wilderness Area.

FACILITIES

Refuge Headquarters - open Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm for general information and backcountry camping permits.

Visitor Center - open for general information, Refuge exhibits, and book sales. Open daily 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Closed Tuesday.

Camp Doris - 90 campsites, drinking water, restrooms, and showers. Fee required. Group sites available. Seasonal hours.

Parking - parking is designated at picnic areas and trail heads. Please do not block gates or other vehicles. Parking space is limited - ease traffic congestion by carpooling. To reduce break-ins, conceal your gear.

For more information refer to Refuge maps or literature, or call Refuge Headquarters at 580/429-3222.

CLIMBING OPPORTUNITIES

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge offers the finest rock climbing opportunities in this region of the country. The good quality granite, multi-pitch routes, wilderness setting, and fine weather have all contributed to make the Refuge a popular climbing destination. Along with this popularity has come noticeable impacts to some areas of the Refuge. Soil erosion, trail degradation, damage to trees, shrubs, lichen and mosses, litter, human waste, and proliferation of fixed anchors are current problems. In order to insure that open access, minimal regulation, and a healthy environment will continue to be a part of your climbing experiences at the Refuge, each climber is encouraged to do everything he or she can to prevent or reduce impact...TODAY!!

CLIMBING ETHICS

While most climbers are committed to "minimal impact" practices, over time, climbing and other recreational activities have begun to make an impact on Refuge resources. It is up to each individual who uses the Refuge to accept responsibility for themselves and for the care of this fragile environment. All climbers should practice "minimum impact" climbing techniques and support a "leave no trace" outdoor ethic when visiting the Refuge. Climbing resources are not limitless. Please value your vertical wilderness and work to reduce or prevent environmental impacts. Your climbing freedom depends on you.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

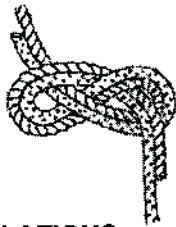
Commit yourself to "minimum impact" and "leave no trace" ideals by adhering to the following climbing ethics:

- * Know and respect environmentally sensitive areas. Fragile plants and soils, wildlife habitat, riparian zones, and wilderness areas require special attention.
- * Climb and travel in small numbers. Disperse your activities.
- * Use established trails to reach climbing areas. Short cuts cause plant damage and erosion.
- * Keep your distance from wildlife. Bison and longhorn cattle are dangerous. Avoid disturbing sensitive habitats and cliff nesting birds.
- * Treat the rock gently. Do not chip, chisel, glue, or otherwise deface our rock resources. Leave the rock and surrounding area in its natural condition. **BOLTING IS NOT PERMITTED WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL.** (see below)
- * Minimize chalk use and brush off heavily chalked holds.
- * Use natural colored nylon webbing if you must leave fixed slings.
- * Pack out what you bring in. Do not leave tape, cigarette butts, food wraps and leftovers, or other litter. Remove and carry out old nylon slings. Leave the area cleaner than you found it.
- * Dispose of human waste properly. Whenever possible use restrooms; otherwise bury your waste and carry out toilet paper in a plastic bag. Do not leave human waste within 200 feet of any water source or at the base of a climb.
- * Please be considerate of other visitors. Loud noise detracts from the wilderness setting and disturbs others. Do not tie up routes you are not using.
- * Support conservation by taking part in organized clean-ups, trail rehabilitation, and other volunteer projects at the Refuge. For more information on what you can do to help, contact the Wichita Mountains Climbers Coalition or the Access Fund.

CLIMBING REGULATIONS

Technical rock climbing is allowed during daylight hours throughout the Public Use portion of the Refuge with the following exceptions:

- * Sport rappelling is prohibited in the area popularly known as the "Narrows" and is defined as the area along West Cache Creek downstream of Boulder Cabin
- * Rock faces are closed to climbing activity on the north and east side of West Cache Creek downstream of Boulder Cabin in the area known as "The Narrows"
- * Placement of fixed anchors (bolts) including replacement of existing bolts **IS PROHIBITED** without the approval of the Refuge Manager through the Advisory Bolting Committee (see below)
- * Commercial or instructional operators who charge for their services while on Refuge lands are required to obtain an annual Special Use Permit from the Refuge Manager. Fee required.



OTHER REGULATIONS

- * general camping is permitted only at Doris Campground
- * backcountry camping is by permit only and in designated areas
- * alcoholic beverages are prohibited
- * no swimming in all Refuge waters

FIXED ANCHORS

The placement, removal, or replacement of fixed anchors, including bolts, pitons, rivets, cold-shuts, and chains, is not permitted without prior approval of Refuge Management.

Any climber desiring to add, remove, or replace any fixed anchor must submit a "Fixed Anchor Application" for review by Refuge Management and the Advisory Bolting Committee (ABC) of the Wichita Mountain Climbers Coalition (WMCC). Applications are available at Refuge Headquarters. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and the ABC review applications based upon aesthetic and natural resource criteria.

STATEMENT OF NON-LIABILITY FOR ROCK CLIMBING AND FIXED ANCHORS

The FWS, WMCC, and ABC review fixed anchor applications and make recommendations concerning fixed anchors *based upon aesthetic and natural resource criteria*. The FWS, WMCC, and ABC make no representations or warranties regarding the safety, reliability or suitability for use of any fixed anchors or other hardware, currently existing or installed in the future, on any climbing route in the WMWR. Moreover, the FWS, WMCC and ABC make no representations or warranties regarding the degree of hazard or danger involved, or lack thereof, on any rock climbing route in the WMWR. Rock climbing is a dangerous activity and the individual climber must personally make all decisions regarding his or her safety while climbing.

Report all accidents involving significant personal injury to Refuge personnel.